

# INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

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## LESSON FOR SEPTEMBER 16

### THE FIERY FURNACE.

LESSON TEXT—Daniel 1.  
GOLDEN TEXT—When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned: neither shalt the flame kindle upon thee.—Isaiah 43:2.

I. The Occasion (vv. 1-7). The fact that God said to Nebuchadnezzar, "Thou art this head of gold" (2:38) was too much for him. Though he appeared to have been deeply impressed with Daniel's God, his pride got the better of him. As he grew great and became conscious of it, he grew proud. This moved him to set up a colossal idol of gold in the Plain of Dura to be worshiped by all the people of his realm. It was an attempt at self-deification. It combined with it a political move, the object of which was to weld together the various kingdoms and peoples into one homogeneous body. He inaugurated a religious festival, and called upon all the people to worship the image which he set up. He backed this demand by civil authority. The penalty for refusal to bow down and worship the image was to be cast into the burning fiery furnace. Imposing images are set up in many places, and men and women are being called upon to bow down and worship them. Some of these images are money, fashion, scholarship, worldly ambition, pleasures, etc., and woe be to those who will not worship before them.

II. The Behavior of the Hebrews (vv. 8-18). (1) The accusation by the envious spies (vv. 8-12).

Daniel's three friends had been promoted to positions of honor and responsibility. Certain Chaldeans whose envy had been excited by the promotion of these Hebrews, sought occasion against them. This they found when the Hebrews would not bow down and worship the image. Envious eyes are always watching God's faithful ones. Had these Chaldeans been faithfully worshipping, they would not have seen the Hebrews.

(2) The king's rage (vv. 12-15).

He calls the Hebrews before him, questions them and gives them another chance. The offense was not serious—they were defying the authority of the one who had honored them in their promotion; it savored of ingratitude. After closely questioning them he gave them another opportunity to consider their position before consigning them to the fire. His supreme mistake was in the challenge he made to the God of the Hebrews. He seems to have forgotten entirely the confession he had made with reference to God (2:47).

(3) The courageous reply of the faithful Hebrews (vv. 16-18).

They replied without passion or fear. The peace of God filled their hearts. Their behavior is an expression of triumphant faith. "We are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." They courageously showed their contempt for death. They were not afraid to die, but were afraid to sin against God. They knew that to bow down before this image was to disobey and dishonor God. While they did not know what God would do, in the premises they knew that he would do the right thing. These Hebrews were far away from home, exposed to the most severe temptation, but they saw their duty clearly set before them. God's law plainly settled it for them. They did not try to find an excuse to evade their duty, and seeing the way clearly they acted accordingly.

III. The Glorious Issue (vv. 19-30).

(1) The harmless furnace (vv. 19-25).

The infuriated king ordered the heat of the furnace to be intensified, his most mighty men to bind the Hebrews and fling them into the fire. Though the heat was so intense that the soldiers who cast them into the furnace were slain, the Hebrews were seen walking loose in the fire without any hurt. Equally astounding was the fact that a fourth one was seen with them.

(2) The convinced king (vv. 26-28).

The spectacle was so wonderful that the king called the Hebrews together out of the fire. They came forth unharmed, for the fire had no power over their bodies; not even a hair of their heads was singed, their coats changed, nor the smell of fire upon them (v. 27).

(3) The king's decree (v. 29).

This was most foolish and wicked. Even a king has no right to kill people for not worshipping God.

(4) Promotion of the Hebrews (v. 30).

Their fidelity in this trying ordeal resulted in their promotion instead of downfall. May we learn from this that:

- (a) God alone is Lord of the conscience. One's faith and worship should be determined by the individual before his God. No church, king or ruler has a right to interfere.
- (b) We should meet religious intolerance by being obedient to God rather than man.
- (c) God will support those who are faithful.
- (d) We should prepare for fiery trials, and through them all be true to our conscience.

## The Dying Thief

By REV. L. W. GOSNELL  
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TEXT—And he said, Jesus, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom. And he said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in Paradise.—Luke 23:42-43 R. V.

The highway robbers of Christ's day were often popular heroes, Jewish Rob Roy, full of zeal to deliver their people from the Roman yoke. The two crucified with Christ may have been companions of Barabbas. One of them cries, "If thou be the Christ—the Messiah—save thyself and us," he was doubtless thinking of the Jewish hopes for deliverance. But the other, who seems himself to have repented Christ just a little before, turns to rebuke his companion and shows that a change has been wrought in him which continues to be an astonishment to all who read of it.

The misfactor was an unlikely person to be converted. The disciples had forsaken Christ and fled but this sinful man joins himself to him. He was the first of a long line of trophies from among the foes of Christ. The chief persecutor of the early church became its chief apostle, and the power of the cross over Christ's enemies abides. Elijah P. Brown, for many years editor of a well-known religious weekly, was once a leader of infidel clubs, yet God brought him to Christ under a simple plea from D. L. Moody. We should count no man hopeless but should covet Christ's enemies for his cause.

Unlikely Place for Conversion.

A cross was an unlikely place for conversion. The cross has been glorified in our eyes, but we are not to forget that it looked no more attractive to those who first saw it than a gallows looks to us. John Wesley declares that at one period he would have thought it a sin to seek to save souls outside a church building, but he was driven to the fields to preach and learned that any place can become holy ground. Samuel Hadley started heavenward from the back room of a low saloon.

The dying hour was an unlikely period for conversion. This story forever rebukes the idea that acceptance with God depends upon a round of sacraments or good works, for he had time for neither. This lesson still needs to be learned. Wesley was for many years a professing Christian, and even an ordained minister, before he learned it. He tells how he was thrilled in first preaching salvation, by faith alone, to a condemned prisoner and his joy when he heard the man say: "I am now ready to die. I know he has taken away my sins and there is no more condemnation for me."

Interesting Points.

There are several interesting points connected with the thief's conversion.

It began with the fear of God. He asks his companion, "Dost not thou fear God seeing thou art in the same condemnation?" His heart had been solemnized by the darkness which spread over the land and by all the scenes of the crucifixion. "Nobody fears God any more"—so we are told today. And indeed this frivolous, self-satisfied age is not marked by the fear of the Lord. It may require the horrors of an awful war to bring us to seriousness and a sense of the majesty of God. Alas, for the fact that sometime even God's judgments fall in this matter, just as one of the robbers was unmoved by all he had witnessed!

It was accompanied by frank confession of his sin. "We receive the due reward of our deeds." How refreshing when visiting in prisons, to find one who acknowledges his guilt and expresses contrition; there is hope for such a man.

Remarkable Faith.

But we would speak especially of the remarkable faith of this man. He prays, "Jesus, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom." To the multitude, and even to the disciples, the inscription declaring Jesus to be king of the Jews must have seemed a mockery indeed. The life of Jesus appeared a complete failure and his claims exploded. Yet, in that hour, there was begotten in the heart of this rough fellow a faith that saw the kingdom even beyond the cross. It was a faith akin to that by which Abraham was justified, of whom it is said he believed God "who quickened the dead and calleth those things which be not as though they were."

Somehow, men are prone to abuse God's gifts. We presume upon such mercy as it is set forth in this story and turn the grace of God into lasciviousness. Men argue that because the dying thief was saved, they too may be saved when dying, and so they put off repentance for their deathbeds. But how knowest thou, O man, that such an opportunity will be thine? Even if time be given at the last, the heart may be adamant and repentance an impossibility. "True repentance is never too late; late repentance is seldom true."

## HANDICRAFT FOR BOYS

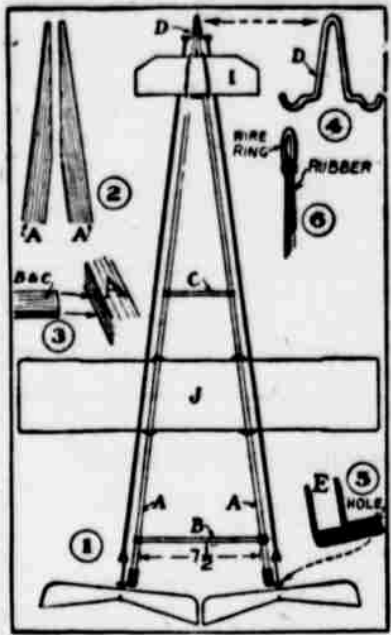
By A. NEELY HALL  
Author of "The Handy Boy," "The Boy Craftsman," "Handicraft for Handy Boys," etc.  
(Copyright, by A. Neely Hall.)

### A MODEL AEROPLANE.

This model aeroplane is built along the lines of the models that have won records for distance flights.

The triangular frame consists of the two pine side sticks A (Fig. 1), 1/4 inch square and 32 inches long, and two bamboo stick B and C, 1-16 inch thick and 1/4 inch wide—B 8 inches long and C 4 1/4 inches long.

The bow end of sticks A must be tapered on the inside edges as shown in Fig. 2, so they will come together, and slots must be cut through these sticks for the ends of sticks B and C to stick through (Fig. 3). Cut the



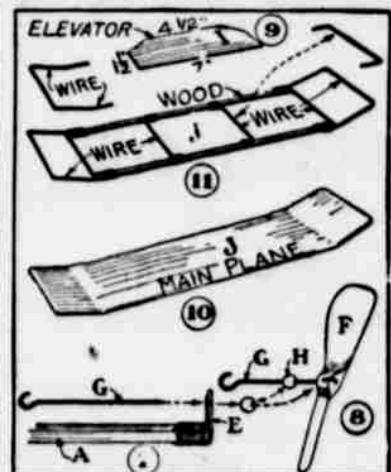
slots for B 2 1/4 inches from the stern end, and the slots for C halfway between these and the bow end. Slip separators B and C into the slots, and then bind with strong linen thread.

Bow hooks D (Figs. 1 and 4) support the bow end of the rubber motor, and are bent out of a piece of heavy piano wire. Bend the wire V-shaped to fit the bow ends of sticks A, and bind to the sticks with thread (Fig. 1).

The bow ends of sticks A must have metal bearing-plates similar to E (Fig. 5) bound to them with thread.

A pair of accurately made propellers can be purchased at toy stores.

The propeller shafts (G, Fig. 8) are made of heavy piano wire. Band one



end into a hook (Fig. 7) to receive the end of the rubber motor, then run the other end through the hole in bearing-plates E (Fig. 7), slip a glass bead (H) over it for a "thrust-bearing," and run it through the propeller hub and bend over the side of the hub (Fig. 8).

The motors are made of strands of rubber. Rubber bands can be looped in one another, end to end, to form the strands, but strands all in one piece are better. Twelve strands are needed for each motor. Fasten the



bow ends of the strands to wire rings (Fig. 6), so they may be slipped on and off hooks D quickly.

With the motors in place, the "elevator plane" I and "main plane" J (Figs. 1, 9 and 10) remain to be made. Elevator I is made of two wooden side strips 15 inches long, 1-16 inch thick, and 1/4 inch wide, connected with wire separators bent and joined to the strips in the manner shown in Fig. 11. The end wire tips should extend beyond the wooden strips 2 1/4 inches, and be bent to the angle shown. Cover the frame with china silk. Sew or glue this on to the frame, then give it a thin coat of shellac.

The planes should not be fastened securely to the model aeroplane frame work, but be held to it by rubber bands so their positions may be adjusted to the points where they will give the model the greatest stability in flight.

## NATIONAL GUARDSMEN TAKE FEDERAL OATH



Photo by American Press Association.

Members of the national guard in the various states throughout the United States were rapidly sworn in as federal troops. The guardsmen army officers say will make fine troops.

### Why It Costs Less to Have These Tires On Your Car

Because of their supreme mileage-giving qualities.  
For United States Tires are the standards of low mileage cost.  
That is why their sales continue to forge ahead year by year, month by month.  
That is why users of United States Tires last year are still users of United States Tires this year.  
That is why, sooner or later, you, too, will be a user of United States Tires.  
Ask the nearest United States Tire dealer which one of the five is suited to your needs of price and use.

## United States Tires Are Good Tires

A Tire for Every Need of Price and Use  
'Royal Cord' 'Nobby' 'Chain' 'Ucco' 'Plain'

United States TUBES and TIRE ACCESSORIES Have All the Stirling Worth and Wear that Make United States Tires Supreme

Also tires for motor trucks, motor cycles, bicycles, and aeroplanes

### BE CHEERFUL.

Strive at all times to be cheerful. What a subtle kind of heartache we give others by simply not being at our best and highest, when they have to make allowances for us, when the dark side is uppermost in our minds and we take their sunlight and courage away by even our unspoken thoughts, our atmosphere of heaviness! Oh, to stand always and eternally for sunlight and life and cheer!

### "White" a Misnomer.

The fallacy of the average Englishman who regards black as white has been noted by G. K. Chesterton, the English writer. "People," he writes, "never ask whether the current color language is always correct. Ordinary sensible phraseology sometimes calls black white; it certainly calls yellow white and green white and reddish brown white. We call wine 'white wine' which is as yellow as a Bluecoat boy's legs. We call grapes 'white grapes' which are manifestly pale green. We give to the European, whose complexion is a sort of pink drab, the horrible title of 'white man'—a picture more bloodcurdling than any specter in Poe."

### Change in Fortunes.

He entered the cafe with an air, he seated himself at a table with a flourish. The chief of the waiters noted him and flew to his elbow.  
"Give me the bill of fare," sighed the guest.  
"Yea, sir!" breathed the waiter.  
"By the way, waiter, your face is strangely familiar."  
"Possibly, sir. Last year I was a guest here, not a servant. But—if you will pardon me for my presumption—I seem to know your face too."  
"Probably. Last year I was a waiter here."  
Isn't it pathetic, this renewing of old friendships?—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

## MULES FOR ARMY CAREFULLY MEASURED



Mule recruits for Uncle Sam's army pack trains and wagons must come up to a high standard. Picture shows a "shave tall," as the army mule is called, being measured for height. Thousands of them will be needed.

It Pays to Grind Your Ax—and to Educate Your Mind